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Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3931st Meeting

Thursday, 24 September 1998, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Hjelm-Wallén	(Sweden)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Khalifa
	Brazil	Mr. Lampreia
	China	Mr. Tang Jiaxuan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Rojas López
	France	Mr. Védrine
	Gabon	Mr. Oye Mba
	Gambia	Mr. Jobe
	Japan	Mr. Koumura
	Kenya	Mr. Godana
	Portugal	Mr. Gama
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Friec
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Cook
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318)

98-85876 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The President: Members of the Security Council will recall that the date and agenda for this meeting were agreed upon by members of the Council in its prior consultations.

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318)

Invitation to His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I request the Chief of Protocol to escort His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

Invitation to Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, took a seat at the Council table.

Representation by and welcome to Foreign Ministers

The President: I am pleased to acknowledge that, at this meeting of the Security Council, Bahrain, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America are represented by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs. I welcome their presence at the Council table.

I should also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence of other Ministers for Foreign Affairs in the Council Chamber today. Their presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter to be addressed at this meeting. The spirit of cooperation demonstrated by all those present here, which has made this meeting possible, is greatly appreciated by all of us.

The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is today holding its second ministerial meeting on Africa. Members of the Security Council have before them document S/1998/318, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which was submitted pursuant to the request of the Council at its first ministerial meeting on Africa.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/1998/876, which contains the text of a letter dated 18 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, transmitting a letter of the same date from the Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, in his capacity as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Union, addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I should like to recall that the Secretary-General formally presented his report at a meeting of the Council on 16 April 1998, at which numerous delegations spoke. At its 3886th meeting, held on 28 May 1998, the Council adopted resolution 1170 (1998), by which, *inter alia*, it decided to establish an ad hoc Working Group to review all the recommendations in the report related to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The ad hoc Working Group was asked to submit specific proposals for concrete action for consideration by the Council by September 1998.

I should like to recall also that on the basis of recommendations made by the ad hoc working group, the Security Council recently adopted two resolutions and a presidential statement. Resolution 1196 (1998) of 16 September 1998 concerned strengthening the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Council; resolution

1197 (1998) of 18 September 1998 dealt with strengthening the coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and maintenance of peace; and presidential statement S/PRST/1998/28 of 16 September 1998 dealt with strengthening Africa's peacekeeping capacity.

It is my privilege to call now on the President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. His Excellency, Mr. Blaise Compaoré. I welcome His Excellency and invite him to make his statement.

President Compaoré (Burkina Faso)(*interpretation from French*): I am sure everyone will understand that I feel particularly heartened and appreciative that, at a time when I have come to speak on behalf of Africa before the international community, the Security Council should be devoting a special meeting to the situation prevailing on our continent. I hail this commendable initiative which gives me the opportunity to share with the Council some of our concerns.

I would like to commend you and thank you very sincerely, Madam President, for the sustained interest that you are taking in the problems of Africa. I am confident that your presidency of the Council will be of great benefit to our Organization.

To the Secretary-General, I wish to express once again our great satisfaction at the work he is accomplishing daily in the service of peace.

As I said in the General Assembly, Africa's security problems are huge and complicated. However, we are convinced that with unity and the cooperation of the United Nations we will be able to face all our trials, and with the solidarity of the international community, we will win the battle for peace. Admittedly, the resurgence of African crises and the difficulty involved in resolving them lead us at times to exasperation and pessimism. But strong in our resolve and determination, we have confidence in our ability to cope with all our difficulties.

A year ago the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Africa in which it reaffirmed responsibility incumbent on all Member States of the United Nations to settle their disputes by peaceful means. Since then, the situation on our continent has not evolved positively. Certain crises dating back many years still present the international community with a genuine challenge that it must deal with at all costs. This is the case of Angola, of Somalia and of others.

Added to these endless crises are new conflicts which clamour equally for our attention because of their complexity and the grave dangers they pose to the subregion where they are occurring and on the continent as a whole. Ethiopia and Eritrea are on the brink of a full-scale conflagration. Since its thirty-fourth summit, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been doing its utmost to contain the situation. For that purpose, I went to Addis Ababa and Asmara, accompanied by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Bizimungu of Rwanda and the Foreign Minister of Djibouti.

That mission had the merit of containing the further development of the situation following the appeal that we issued to the two parties to show restraint and refrain from any act which might provoke escalation. I would like therefore to take the opportunity of this meeting to express once again to the leaders of those two countries our great appreciation for their commitment to giving peace a chance, and we welcome the trust they place in the Organization of African Unity to assist them in settling their dispute peacefully.

We are still pursuing our endeavours. At present I am in consultations with my counterparts with a view to holding a meeting shortly in Ouagadougou, at which we hope to present the two parties with specific proposals. In our view, the solution to this conflict will require the unreserved support and assistance of the international community, and most particularly of the United Nations, for the efforts of the Organization of African Unity and its proposals.

Likewise, the OAU will need to work closely with the United Nations in managing and resolving the serious and dramatic crisis that has just broken out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is serious and dramatic given the number of countries whose armed forces are currently involved in it and its huge potential for subregional destabilization. It is thus a first in the history of Africa and undoubtedly calls for international mobilization in order to put an end to it. I urge the United Nations, and most particularly the Security Council, to be ready at the appropriate time to respond favourably to our requests.

Such crises call for action by the United Nations as well as by the Organization of African Unity. The presidential statement on Africa recalled the particular

responsibility of the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. This commitment on the part of the United Nations is reflected in the field by certain specific activities, such as the dispatching of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), with the support of certain Member States whose spirit of solidarity and unselfishness I wish to commend.

The United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) is also doing useful work, despite the tragic death of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, to whose memory I wish to pay tribute, and despite the discouraging failure of the attempts at reconciliation. I call on the two parties, the Government of Angola and UNITA, to resume dialogue, without which peace will remain no more than a dream. I also call on the United Nations to persevere in its mission of persuasion and mediation and become even more involved in the process of seeking a lasting solution.

The same applies to the conflicts of the Great Lakes region and in Guinea-Bissau. Here we urge the protagonists to turn away from the clash of arms and towards consultation. They must be convinced that no solution can be contemplated without constructive dialogue.

I do not wish to conclude without returning to two questions that currently fall within the purview of the Security Council. The first is the dispute between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the United Kingdom and the United States. Now that the question is being addressed through legal channels, and that for this purpose the Security Council has entrusted the Secretary-General with a specific mandate, it seems vital that a minimum set of safeguards be accorded the two Libyan suspects, with a view to a fair and just trial, with specific respect for the individual.

The second matter has to do with the bombing of the pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan. Together with the Non-Aligned Movement and the States of the Arab League, the Organization of African Unity supports the sending of an international commission of inquiry, as requested by the Sudan, to clarify fully this matter.

For this purpose, and in order to avoid in the future this kind of unacceptable reprisal carried out indiscriminately in the name of combating terrorism, it seems particularly urgent that the international community address the question of terrorism in general, a barbarous and vile practice which we vigorously condemn. As it is a matter of worldwide impact, it is the international community which should find a solution to it and an appropriate response.

Furthermore, on the eve of the twenty-first century, it is inconceivable that no international convention to combat terrorism exists. I would therefore suggest that a high-level international conference on terrorism be convened in the year 2000 under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a conference could be preceded by regional preparatory conferences beginning next year.

Mindful as I am that economic development is another dimension of peace, I envisage the convening of a summit conference to address questions related to economics and development in Africa. My contacts in this regard with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the World Bank, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme have been very promising.

But all our ambitions for Africa will be in vain if we do not succeed in giving it a positive image, that is to say, credibility at the international level. For that reason, I also intend to bring together communications experts to set to work on this task.

The need for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations is more vital than ever. International peace and security are a requirement, not only for our time but also for future generations.

The Charters of both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity remind us of how indispensable it is that our two organizations cooperate. For our part, I can assure the Council of the unfailing care and support of the Organization of African Unity.

The President: I thank the President of Burkina Faso, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Secretary-General: It is with great pleasure that I join you for this second ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa. Our meeting is the fruit of your determination to make a difference for peace and for prosperity in Africa. It is an expression of the political will that I called for in my report

(S/1998/318) last April — the political will which is the condition for any success that our endeavours may meet with in Africa, as elsewhere.

Throughout the last six months, and most recently at the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, African leaders have pledged to help implement the report's recommendations. Just as importantly, ordinary men and women in every part of Africa heard their United Nations speak in a voice that recognized the realities they face, day in and day out. Let us never forget that it is for them — the peoples of Africa — that our ideas must matter and make a difference.

The report aimed to contribute to Africa's progress in two distinct but related ways: first, by paying the peoples of Africa the tribute of truth — by honestly and candidly reporting to the world their challenges and their aspirations; secondly, by proposing realistic and achievable recommendations for how those challenges may be met. I am therefore very pleased to witness the serious and constructive manner in which the Council, through its ad hoc working group, has begun to address the report's recommendations. We have had a good start.

Following the submission of the report in April, you asked the Secretariat to provide ideas for practical actions that could be taken by the Secretariat and United Nations agencies.

I can report today that the United Nations Secretariat is vigorously working on follow-up activities to the report and that I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to monitor its implementation. Even before this plan is finalized, however, we have begun our work.

In July, we convened two international conferences — one on Guinea and the other on Sierra Leone — to focus international attention on the efforts of those two countries to restore or strengthen peace and stability and to help them do so. We have also provided the Council with specific proposals for the establishment of an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps. And we have begun discussions on the need to stem illicit arms flows to and in Africa.

The Council, for its part, has shown its commitment to the aims of the report and to lasting peace in Africa, first, by setting up active working groups and adopting very important resolutions on the report's recommendations, and, secondly, by authorizing new peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. I am also pleased to note that the General Assembly will be considering my report in October, and I look forward to the conclusions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination's fall session devoted mainly to the inter-agency aspects of the report.

In the report, I emphasized that any and all efforts at securing peace had to be combined with steps towards ending Africa's poverty. Specifically, I called for the promotion of investments and economic growth, ensuring adequate levels of international aid, reducing debt burdens and opening international markets to Africa's products. These are aims on which we can all agree; we can also all agree that they are far from being met.

Yesterday, I convened an informal meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Development Assistance Committee countries to highlight five priority areas in meeting Africa's economic challenges. Those needs are, first, to increase the volume and improve the quality of official development assistance; secondly, to consider converting all remaining official bilateral debt owed by the poorest African countries into grants; thirdly, to liberalize access to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative; fourthly, to ease access conditions for African exports; and fifthly, to encourage investment in Africa, which has largely been marginalized in the process of globalization.

I am pleased to say that all the Governments represented reaffirmed their support for the recommendations in the report, and in particular for the five priority areas I have just indicated.

At the same time, they stressed the need on the part of African States to create an enabling environment for investment and economic growth. There must be reciprocity. No one can be expected to invest in unstable or insecure neighbourhoods.

If we now recognize that peace and prosperity must be sought as one, with equal priority and equal persistence, then we must also understand the broader nature of the human security we seek. That is why the United Nations increasingly is taking a comprehensive, holistic approach to all our peacekeeping and peace-building activities. We have learned that electoral assistance must be part of democracy-building; that securing human rights will ensure genuine political liberty; and that political development must be integral to

economic development. And we are applying these lessons every day.

There have recently been positive developments in a number of African countries seeking to escape conflict or to make the transition from dictatorship to democracy. In this regard, I would like to express my hope that the leadership of Nigeria will continue on the path to good governance and the rule of law, strengthening democratic institutions and organizing free and fair elections in February leading to the handover to civilian rule by the end of May 1999.

Regrettably, however, this move away from the rule of the gun has seemed the exception rather than the rule in recent months. Indeed, in the six months that have passed since I presented the report, we have witnessed fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Guinea-Bissau, in Angola and in Sierra Leone, while the humanitarian crises in Somalia and the Sudan seem only to grow with every passing day.

The United Nations, in partnership with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is actively involved in seeking an end to every one of these crises and in alleviating the suffering borne by innocent civilians. But in a larger sense we can only appeal to the wisdom and the responsibility of leaders to put the interests of their own people first.

Without the determination of the parties themselves to reach political accommodation, there is little we can do except offer the band-aid of humanitarian assistance, often with great difficulty and at great risk. We are in no position to impose the peace that the peoples so fervently desire and so richly deserve.

What will it take for Africa's leaders finally to reject military solutions to political challenges? When will the realization arrive that not one — not a single one — of these conflicts can end in the absence of compromise, tolerance and the peaceful resolution of disputes? When will the time come when we can all say that we did our best for Africa, that its leaders came together and resolved peacefully their differences and that we in the international community finally did our part to help secure durable peace and ensure lasting development?

Allow me to suggest that they, and we, look to Nelson Mandela; that they, and we, listen to the final words of the final United Nations address of his presidency; and that they, and we, show ourselves worthy of his great hope for the continent of Africa. We hope that there will emerge

> "a cadre of leaders ... which will not allow that any should be denied their freedom, as we were; that any should be turned into refugees, as we were; that any should be condemned to go hungry, as we were; that any should be stripped of their human dignity, as we were." (*A/53/PV.7*)

Against all odds, President Mandela achieved his aim for his nation and for his people. Let that achievement be a source of inspiration for all of us.

The President: I call on the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim.

Mr. Salim (Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity): I am very pleased that this important meeting of the Security Council devoted to Africa is being held under the presidency of Sweden. We appreciate deeply the contribution that Sweden has made since the period of our continent's struggle against colonialism and apartheid, and its efforts to promote development and improve the welfare of our people. Throughout this period, Sweden has stood firmly in support of Africa's quest for freedom, justice, dignity and development.

On a personal note, let me say how happy I am to see you, Madam President, presiding over the deliberations of the Council. Having known you for many years and having had the pleasure of working with you in different areas of mutual concern, I am very conscious of your personal commitment to the causes which are so dear to our continent.

Tomorrow, 25 September 1998, it will be exactly one year since we met here in an unprecedented meeting of the Security Council at ministerial level, held at the initiative of the United States Government, to review the state of the African continent and to assess how we had collectively fared in dealing with the myriad challenges that confront the continent. Since then, we have received the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I wish to pay a deserved tribute to the Secretary-General for his focused and comprehensive report, which deserves serious consideration, and for the strong commitment and

keen interest that he continues to show in matters affecting the continent and its people.

Let me also express my gratitude to all the members of the Security Council for their continued interest in Africa. It is indeed encouraging that the Security Council continues to demonstrate special interest in and concern about developments in our continent. I hope that this will lead to a more active involvement of the United Nations in support of our efforts towards a more peaceful, stable and progress-oriented continent.

Since the last special ministerial meeting on Africa, our continent has continued to be confronted by severe problems of a socio-economic and political nature. On the political front, despite some encouraging developments, such as those in Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic, the progress in the peace process in Burundi, and the positive steps towards democracy in some African countries, the continent has not been spared conflicts, with the attendant consequences in terms of loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure and property and immense suffering to our people. At the same time, Africa as a whole has continued to experience a difficult economic situation. These difficulties are further compounded by the severe problems and tensions resulting from the socio-economic reform and transformation programmes being carried out by most of our countries.

In spite of these daunting problems, it is a matter of record that one of the remarkable features of the state of affairs of our continent has been our demonstrable determination to seek solutions that can improve our situation. African leaders have left no stone unturned in taking initiatives to promote a peaceful resolution of the various conflicts afflicting the continent. The sustained efforts deployed by African countries in attempts to contain the crises which erupted between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the Comoros, in Guinea-Bissau and, most recently, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are a clear testimony to Africa's commitment to address its problems, particularly those affecting peace, security and stability.

In all those efforts, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has endeavoured to assume its continental responsibility in a spirit of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity between the continental body and African subregional organizations. Indeed, we believe in African solutions to African problems within the framework of regional and subregional initiatives. Increasingly, such approaches are offering real prospects for conflict containment and conflict resolution in Africa. These initiatives need, however, to be strengthened and supported at the continental level and internationally in a spirit of true partnership for peace.

We have also worked closely with the United Nations in bringing the collective weight of our two Organizations to bear in promoting peaceful solutions to conflicts in the continent. In doing so we have been guided by the Cairo Summit Declaration establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which underlines the importance of the cooperation between the Organization of African Unity, African subregional organizations and the United Nations.

It is in this context that we, at the OAU, attach the greatest importance to the strengthening of relations and cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. We value the role and contribution that the United Nations, as the world body, can make in support of the peace efforts and initiatives in the continent.

I wish, in this respect, to put on record my highest appreciation for the commitment and disposition demonstrated by the United Nations Secretary-General, with whom I have been working very closely. Our most recent joint endeavour in Durban, on the margins of the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, where we worked hard and hand in hand in promoting conditions for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is an example of cooperation that we need to pursue.

As African leaders, working together with their continental Organization, continue to deploy their efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in that country, the Security Council should extend its strong support to these efforts. In view of the magnitude of the crisis and its far-reaching implications for the region and the continent as a whole, and as the principal body for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should stand ready not only in providing concrete support and assistance to regional and continental efforts but also, if and when the need arises, to set up a peacekeeping mechanism to consolidate peace and understanding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region. I need hardly emphasize that peace, stability and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with its sovereignty and territorial integrity intact is in our collective interest. Conversely, chaos and anarchy in that vital African country will not only be a nightmare for the Congolese people and the people of the region, but will also affect Africa as a whole.

The unfortunate crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea is also of the utmost concern. The Organization of African Unity, through its high level delegation of heads of State, under the leadership of the current Chairman, President Blaise Compaoré, has been deploying efforts aimed at promoting an early peaceful solution to the conflict. Indeed, we believe that everything has to be done to avert a further escalation of tension and to avoid a military confrontation between the two countries, which could only bring about suffering and destruction to their people and would also undermine the prospects for lasting peace, security and stability in the region. The international community should therefore continue to urge the parties to seek a peaceful solution based on United Nations and OAU principles and taking into account the long-term interests of the two countries.

As we meet today, the pursuit of the peace process in Angola is fraught with serious difficulties and obstacles. Indeed, the continued and flagrant violation of the Lusaka Protocol and Security Council resolutions by UNITA is a matter of serious concern. The international community and, particularly, the Security Council should exert the necessary pressure on Mr. Savimbi to live up to his commitments, according to the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to avoid plunging that country again into fratricidal and senseless conflict.

The dispute between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States and Great Britain is a matter of concern to the Security Council, as it is to the Organization of African Unity. Last September in our addresses to the Security Council both the current Chairman of the OAU and I specifically referred to this issue. I therefore welcome the decision of the Governments of the United States and Great Britain to accept the proposal for the suspects to be tried in The Hague by Scottish judges under Scottish law. This decision is consistent with the position supported by the OAU and other organizations, and it provides the conditions for a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Now that this important breakthrough has been achieved, after so many years of misunderstanding and suffering for both the people of the Jamahiriya, who have been experiencing hardships and difficulties caused by the embargo imposed on their country, and for the families of the victims, who have been waiting for so long for justice to be done, the same spirit of accommodation should prevail in the efforts to bring about a just and fair trial for the suspects. In this respect, the concerns expressed by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya need to be addressed in the setting up of modalities for the trial.

An issue of grave concern to us all today is the scourge of terrorism, which is undoubtedly becoming a serious threat to international peace and security. Africa has increasingly become a victim of this scourge. The dastardly terrorist bombings that were perpetrated recently in Kenya and Tanzania, with considerable loss of human lives and massive destruction of infrastructure and property, come to us as a reminder that this threat is real and that no one is safe from these heinous and horrendous acts. It was yet another lesson that the international community should come together in a coordinated and concerted manner in combating terrorism. But, beyond the condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestation, the international community should provide itself with the legal framework and the means to effectively address this scourge.

While our efforts should continue to focus on achieving peace, security and stability, which are so vital, we should not ignore the magnitude of the socio-economic problems confronting our continent, which are real and are also at the core of the issue of peace in Africa.

This is certainly not the time and the place to discuss all the issues that are at the heart of the current debate and negotiations on sustainable growth and development. However, I believe that it is appropriate, in this forum, to reflect on the issues that continue to frustrate Africa's search for pragmatic and forward-looking options to redress the past imbalances. Symptomatic of these imbalances is the thorny issue of external indebtedness of our continent. We believe that the attainment of sustainable development will also hinge on the effective elimination of the bottleneck of external indebtedness.

I also believe that, as we strive to tackle the interrelated problems of peace and development in our continent, we also need to address the current imbalances, both within our countries and between Africa and the developed world. Within our countries, issues such as poverty, exclusion, access to opportunities and resources, corruption, rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and tolerance are at the centre of the debate on national development and cohesion. Internationally, we cannot do without a minimum solidarity in this global village, which cannot accommodate on a sustained basis a healthy and wealthy developed world on the one hand and a poor and unstable Africa on the other.

That is why we should take this opportunity to send a strong signal for a new departure in international economic relations based on a true partnership and a shared vision for a common destiny.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for his kind words addressed to me and about my country.

The President of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, has to leave the meeting. On behalf of the Council, I thank him for his presence here today. I request the Chief of Protocol to escort His Excellency from the Council Chamber.

I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Robin Cook.

Mr. Cook (United Kingdom): I welcome this opportunity to take part in our debate on the Secretary-General's report. I would first of all say that I regard that report on promoting peace and prosperity in Africa as lucid, compelling and directly relevant to the work of the Security Council. Kofi Annan has laid a firm foundation for our work on Africa.

However, I am sure Kofi himself would be the first to say that praise is not a sufficient response to his powerful report. Only action by the Security Council and its members will adequately reward the Secretary-General for the work that has gone into it.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has called for us to meet the report with commitments. This morning I commit Britain to three goals which are central to the report before us today.

First, we will help build prosperity in Africa. As a Government we are determined to reduce poverty at home. That confers on us a moral obligation to help fight poverty abroad. And we also have a hard-nosed self-interest in seeing Africa wealthy and prosperous. The richer Africa becomes, the better it is for the rest of the world as well. The global economy is not a zero-sum game. If we are all prosperous, we all win. If there is widespread poverty, we all lose.

There are four key steps that Britain is prepared to take to encourage economic growth in Africa.

We will promote African trade, by demanding that African countries get a fair deal in international trade negotiations and that Africa benefits from the globalization of the economy. Free trade must also be fair trade.

We will reduce African debt, so that African economies are not crippled by having to pay extravagant proportions of their income to countries far richer than themselves. Britain has already played a leading role in the Mauritius initiative to reduce the debt of the poorest countries, so many of which are in Africa.

We will act to promote African development. Britain has refocused its development assistance so that it makes a real difference to the poorest people and gets through to the rural areas which, as the report before us demonstrates, have received a small minority of aid although they may have a large majority of the population. We will be increasing our development budget dramatically over the next three years to an extra $1.6 billion over those three years. Forty per cent of that aid budget already goes to Africa, and Britain will thus be increasing our aid to Africa.

And we will encourage sound economic management. All the development assistance in the world will not help any country which mismanages its economy.

The second commitment I give the Security Council is that we will make it the priority of our diplomacy in Africa to build peace and to prevent conflict. Without peace, nothing else is possible — no development, no prosperity, no improvement in the lives of ordinary Africans. Yet in one single year, as the report before us details, one in four countries in Africa experienced conflict and half of the worldwide deaths from conflict were in Africa. The days have long gone when anyone could think of imposing solutions from outside the continent. As has already been said by the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Africa's problems require African leadership to find the solutions. But there is much that countries with greater resources can do to make those solutions work.

Britain will support the Organization of African Unity in its peacekeeping initiatives. In support of those initiatives we have helped establish military training centres in Ghana and Zimbabwe to develop Africa's own capacity for peacekeeping. We will fund the process of rebuilding peace where war has destroyed it. For

example, in Sierra Leone, Britain is supporting the cost of demobilization and demilitarization. If we want the armed parties to a conflict to lay down their arms, then realistically we must demonstrate to them that they also have a better economic future in peace. I would urge more of my colleagues here to join us in this essential task.

And we will be responsible in our own policy on the export of arms. We will not allow our sales to fuel other countries' conflicts, and we will support initiatives to control the trade in small arms and to stamp out the illicit market in firearms. On their side, the countries of Africa could do more to promote restraint and transparency in weapons levels. It is particularly disappointing that the report before us confirms that only eight African countries last year submitted an entry to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

My third and final commitment is that we will be a friend of democracy in Africa. Africa is a diverse continent, and we respect the continent's political diversity. But all Members of the United Nations are committed to hold firmly that certain principles and values are universal, such as the people's right to choose their leaders; human rights; basic freedoms; and the rule of law.

Britain will support the democratic process through funding of voter education and the supply of election monitors. With our friends in the Commonwealth, we will work for observance of the Harare principles of human rights and democratic government. And we will support human rights through our development aid. We understand that, in the modern world, the wealth of nations lies in the talents and skill of their people, and that those human resources cannot be promoted when their human rights are suppressed.

It is easy to look at the difficult areas in Africa, but we should not forget those areas where progress has been made. Nigeria is a current example of progress towards democracy. Since June, Nigeria has embarked on a remarkable process of transformation. General Abubakar's willingness to listen and respond to the many shades of Nigerian opinion is impressive. With the support of the Nigerian people, he has redefined Nigeria's political and economic landscape. The progress now being achieved in Nigeria is good not just for its people, but for the whole of West and North Africa, where the Nigerian economy could become an engine of growth for the region.

Before concluding, let me respond briefly to the observations by Mr. Salim A. Salim on the settlement that we have offered to enable a trial to take place of the two suspects accused of the bombing of the Pan Am flight over my country of Scotland. May I assure the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity that we are confident that a trial before Scottish judges, under Scottish law, under Scottish rules of evidence and procedure will indeed be a just and fair trial.

It is only six months ago that the Secretary-General, at my invitation, sent United Nations observers to observe Scottish courts in action; those observers confirmed that a trial under Scottish procedure and Scottish law would be just and fair. I can also say that we have also set aside appropriate prison facilities in Scotland should the accused be convicted; we are confident that their treatment in those prison facilities will be humane and will be fair. Those prison facilities were also inspected by the observers who were sent to us by the Secretary-General; they confirmed the humanitarian nature of the detention there. We are open to other observers and monitoring from any Member of the United Nations or any organization attached to it, because we are confident that we can satisfactorily pass any reasonable test of whether our court proceedings are fair or our prison conditions humane.

I agree with Mr. Salim that it is important that we make progress now in ending the sanctions and in ending the delay for the relatives of those who died, who are still waiting for justice. The way to achieve that is for Libya now to respond to the fair offer we have made and to surrender the two suspects for trial, at which point we are willing to start the process of lifting sanctions on the country of Libya. I am glad that Mr. Salim recognized the case for accommodation, but accommodation cannot be achieved simply by concessions by one side only. We have made a fair and detailed offer; it is now up to Libya to respond to that offer.

Finally, let me end with two further assurances. The first is that Britain will remain fully engaged with the regeneration of Africa. Both I and Prime Minister Blair plan to visit Africa next year. Britain and Africa have close community ties between our peoples and strong commercial ties between our economies. Those ties rest on a long shared history between Britain and Africa; I confess, that history has not always been based on shared equality. So my final assurance is that we approach our shared future in the spirit of partnership. We want the same relationship with African countries as we are forging with the rest of the world: relationships based on equal partnership and mutual respect. If all of us from

other continents approach our relations with the countries of Africa in that spirit, then together we can ensure that the new century will see a new African renaissance.

The President: I call on the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Her Excellency Mrs. Madeleine Korbel Albright.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): Madam President, it is indeed a pleasure to see you in the chair and to follow the tremendous work that you have been doing in this area and others.

A year ago, we held the Security Council's first-ever ministerial meeting on Africa. We hoped to build a new and lasting partnership between Africa and the world based on common interests, mutual respect and a shared commitment to peace, prosperity and freedom. Since then, some African countries and institutions have made inspiring progress.

The majority of African nations are registering economic growth as a result of the difficult but necessary steps they have taken towards participation in global markets. In nations such as Botswana and Mozambique, democracy continues to put down strong roots. And new hope has emerged for Nigeria's long-delayed return to democratic rule. Organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are pursuing innovative approaches to preventing and ending conflicts. Perhaps most encouraging is the moratorium on the manufacture and trade in small arms proposed by a group of West African nations.

In December, I had a very successful trip to six African nations. In March, President Clinton and six African leaders pledged to work for peace, development and the rule of law at the Entebbe Summit. In April, here in New York, the Secretary-General submitted a thoughtful and comprehensive report on peace and development in Africa.

I wish that we had more good news, but the truth is that tragedy and conflict have led the news from Africa this year and it dominates our thoughts as we meet today. Just last month, we were shocked and saddened by the tragic terrorist attacks in Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam and Cape Town. Let me take this opportunity to once again congratulate local authorities for their diligence in pursuing those responsible and to express America's sorrow for those who were hurt or who lost loved ones.

But acts of terror were not the only disturbing events of recent months. From the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and from Africa's western coast to its southern highlands, countries which had begun to recover from strife are being swept back into it. Societies which were beginning to rebuild are seeing their labours lost, and Governments which had moved towards democracy are retreating into tyranny.

For example, the dangerous standoff in the Horn of Africa threatens to become a full-scale inter-State war, Africa's first this decade. A bloody crisis in Congo has undone progress achieved since the departure of former President Mobutu. It has ensnared the armies of neighbouring countries, sparking inter-ethnic violence and raising again the spectre of genocide. In Angola the parties have left the path to peace laid out in the Lusaka Protocol and are poised to drag the country back into civil war, fuelled by months of new arms purchases.

These and other conflicts are taking a tremendous toll — in regional trust eroded, in development opportunities lost and, most important, in human lives. The leaders of countries in crisis have a choice. They can stop now and prevent the slide back to full-scale war; they can be statesmen and guide their nations towards a future of cooperation; or they can continue full-tilt into the past — a past of hatred, violence, instability and isolation. No one else — not their neighbours and not the international community — can make that choice for them, but the international community does have a critical role to play. Our nations, acting together, can make it harder to solve disputes through violence, or we can make it easier for African nations to choose and keep to the path of peace.

We thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement in these difficult challenges and we welcome the response his report has generated. Already we have seen important proposals for improving cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, improving the effectiveness of arms embargoes and developing African peacekeeping capacity. The United States looks forward to leading the working group on maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps.

The working group led by Japan has correctly singled out an area where the international community could quickly make a great deal of difference: the uncontrolled flow of arms, ammunition and explosives into Africa's tensest areas. This dirty business fuels conflict, fortifies extremism and destabilizes entire

regions. All of us whose nations sell such arms or through whose nations the traffic flows bear some responsibility for turning a blind eye to the destruction they cause, and all of us have it in our power to do something in response.

Together, we should move now to curb arms transfers to zones of conflict in Africa. We should begin by committing to full and timely disclosure of all arms shipments into those regions, and we should seek to build international support over the next six months for a voluntary moratorium on the sale of arms that could fuel these inter-connected conflicts. The United States also proposes that Governments and international and non-governmental organizations meet to exchange information on regional arms transfers and to explore further steps.

Secondly, arms control and sanctions regimes are only as strong as their enforcement, and whether the sanctions in question are aimed at a war nearby or a would-be proliferator far away, the international community as a whole will gain from stronger sanctions regimes. We therefore urge United Nations Member States with relevant expertise to prepare programmes to strengthen the capacity of African Governments to monitor and interdict arms flows. The United States is currently considering what training and equipment we could usefully contribute, and we would welcome proposals from others. The United Nations could also develop a clearing house for technical information and for rapid exchange of data on possible violations. Finally, sanctions cannot work where there is no national legislation enforcing them and no penalties for violators. Member States that do not have such legislation should strive to enact it.

The threat posed by arms flows, particularly small arms, is by no means limited to the African continent. The Government of Mali and others, notably those of Norway and Canada, have done a great deal to bring this problem to the world's attention. Let me take this opportunity to welcome those initiatives and to propose two urgent steps for worldwide action.

First, we must put in place responsible arms transfer practices that are effective worldwide. Negotiations have begun under United Nations auspices on a convention based on the path-breaking Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, adopted by the Organization of American States. We should conclude those talks by the year 2000. That should also serve as a target date to restrict the export of shoulder-fired missiles. Secondly, we should establish an international centre to collect and share information on arms transfers.

Perhaps this is an appropriate place to put in a word on Libya and Lockerbie. The United States and the United Kingdom have responded positively to a proposal made to the President of the Security Council by the Libyan Foreign Minister in January 1998 for a Scottish trial in the Netherlands, and we have said yes to the terms they have proposed. There is nothing more to negotiate. Libya should accept its own proposal and deliver the fugitives for trial. Many of you encouraged all of us in the United States and the United Kingdom to accept the proposal. Frankly, it is now time for all of you to encourage Libya to accept — to be able to say yes. I think that my colleague Foreign Secretary Cook has described very well the procedures that have been adopted and the various proposals made in terms of the monitoring. I think that we have done our part, and I think it is now important for Libya to do its part.

Last year we left this ministerial meeting with new momentum behind us and high hopes before us. The majority of African States continue to move ahead, with able leaders and citizens committed to progress and hopeful for the future. Unfortunately, in some key countries we have seen a failure of leadership, and in too many places the rule of law is losing out to the law of force.

Secretary-General Annan has eloquently appealed to the continent's leaders to

> "summon the will to resolve our problems by political, not military means. For every day that we fail to do so, the innocent people of the continent pay a terrible price".

And he has urged us all — Africans and non-Africans — to summon our will and to rise to the challenges we face in Africa.

I hope that we will leave New York resolved to summon our will and to act; and I pledge that the United States will do its part through the steps I have outlined today and by supporting African aspirations for peace and justice.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State of the United States of America for the kind words she addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the pleasure at the outset to commend the efforts that have led to the convening of this important ministerial meeting with a view to discussing the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The painful events and the unstable conditions that today beset several parts of the African continent have made the convening of this meeting imperative.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General's important and valuable report on the causes of conflict in Africa and to voice the hope that both the Security Council and the international community will translate the recommendations contained in that report into concrete measures which will enable the parties to get past such conflicts and make the African continent a secure and stable region. I would like further to applaud the efforts of the Council's working groups on the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations in relation to addressing the challenges that certain African States face and sparing them the conflict, tensions and disputes that have affected all aspects of life and exposed their countries and peoples to numerous risks.

In his report, the Secretary-General has attributed the causes of conflicts to both internal and international dimensions. He made it clear that it will be possible to defuse conflicts if the strong will of the African States concerned and the international community is brought to bear. In this regard, joint African and international concerted efforts and coordinated contributions are thus necessary to settle these conflicts and eliminate their causes.

The continued deterioration of situations in areas of tension in Africa will eventually lead to graver and more serious problems that will affect the economic and social conditions of not just the parties to the conflict but perhaps even others. The situation, therefore, requires the international community to expedite the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions; affirm the principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States; and refrain from changing established and traditionally accepted international boundaries. Furthermore, resort to reason and dialogue, rather than the use of force, to settle conflicts, is an essential contribution towards the defusing of situations and the preservation of the security and stability of areas of tension.

In this context, the efforts exerted by the Economic Community of West African States, in cooperation with the United Nations, which have put an end to the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, should be commended. We should also applaud the steps taken by the Organization of African Unity to settle disputes in the continent through the establishment of machinery for that purpose and through the individual efforts of a number of African leaders who have used their good offices to not only contain, but find just, comprehensive and lasting solutions to, conflicts between States.

While we attach great importance to the role of the Security Council in the prevention of conflicts and the elimination of tensions, the State of Bahrain also supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to enhance the capabilities of the entire United Nations in this respect through the development of contacts between the Organization and regional organizations. It also supports all steps taken with a view to containing or preventing conflicts, as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Organization's Charter. Accordingly, during deliberations on the situation in Africa by the Security Council, the State of Bahrain welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations for the settlement of conflicts in Africa and the efforts of Member States, within the framework of the United Nations, to work together with the African States to improve the latter's capabilities in the field of peacekeeping, to enhance the role of the Organization of African Unity in the management and settlement of disputes, and to strengthen cooperation between the African Organization and the United Nations so that the African contribution in the field of peacekeeping may be more effective. In this connection, the State of Bahrain, convinced of the importance of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes as may be agreed by the parties to those disputes, has also supported Security Council resolution 1170 (1998).

The role of the United Nations in Africa is contingent primarily upon the readiness of the international community and the parties to disputes to explore new ways of promoting security and stability, foremost among which are means to restore confidence to the peoples of the African continent and to benefit from the lessons of the past in order to face the future. It is thus essential to lay emphasis on certain important issues that can help in that direction.

These include, as a priority, enhancement of the capability of African States in the peacekeeping missions in Africa, whether those missions are United Nations missions or are within the framework of a regional organization or a group of States with a mandate from the Security Council. It is very important that consultations be carried out with the Organization of African Unity in the fields of joint training in peacekeeping functions, provision of necessary equipment and enhancement of cooperation between it and the United Nations in this respect. The purpose is not to relieve the international community of its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. Rather, it is to make the African contribution more effective in relation to those responsibilities.

All efforts should be exerted to ensure the necessary protection of refugees and displaced persons, and provide for their sustenance in accordance with international standards and regulations. That is because of concern for their tragic conditions and the fact that their displacement from one country to another poses a threat to the stability of other States. Furthermore, refugee camps must be situated away from military zones.

It is also important to enhance the effectiveness of measures aimed at diminishing the capacity of the parties to a conflict to continue the fighting, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. Resort should be made to a greater degree to sanctions aimed against the decision-makers in the States concerned.

In this connection, we welcome the positive progress made with respect to the dispute between Libya, the United States of America and the United Kingdom concerning the Lockerbie case. We hope that such developments will lead to a peaceful resolution through the appearance of the suspects in the Netherlands, where they will be tried under Scottish law by Scottish judges in accordance with resolution 1192 (1998). We are convinced that a speedy trial and the achievement of the required results would lead to the lifting of the sanctions on Libya thus easing the suffering of the brotherly people of Libya, and would satisfy the demands of all parties concerned with this matter.

The State of Bahrain, which appreciates the contents of the Secretary-General's report, is of the view that the Secretary-General's proposal, endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1170 (1998), to hold a Security Council meeting at the ministerial level every two years to assess progress is worthy of attention and follow-up. The ultimate aim of that proposal is the maintenance of peace and political and economic stability in Africa, in the interest of that continent's States and peoples.

In conclusion, I extend to you, Madam President, our appreciation for steering the deliberations of this meeting. We also appreciate the role played by your friendly country on the international scene for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Relations of Brazil, His Excellency Mr. Luiz Felipe Palmeira Lampreia.

Mr. Lampreia (Brazil): As an African scholar has recently stated, the shifting patterns of global politics since the end of the cold war have radically repositioned the African continent in contemporary world history. A new era of swift and profound transformations in Africa has brought the continent to the forefront of the international agenda. Conflicts are perhaps the more visible and disturbing side of this process of change. If we are meeting at ministerial level in the Security Council for the second consecutive year to examine the situation in Africa, it is because tides of violence continue to wreak havoc among societies that have already endured suffering and exploitation for much too long.

But there are also signs of hope and rebirth in Africa. The peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa looms large as an illustration of what some have come to call an African renaissance. The example of persistence in the struggle for freedom and human dignity provided by President Nelson Mandela remains a source of inspiration for all those who fight for justice and democracy. Africans have finally reconquered their own destinies, and a new generation of African leaders is emerging with a powerful and mature voice. In our midst we can rely on the talent of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a noble representative of the ancient Ashanti tradition, who is bringing a renewed lustre to the concept of diplomacy in world affairs.

The challenge confronting the international community and the United Nations is that of promoting stability in a way that reinforces the hand of those in Africa who remain committed to dialogue and reconciliation. We are convinced that the overwhelming majority of Africans are eager to devote their energy and

creativity to social and economic reconstruction in an atmosphere of tolerance and solidarity. As a country that owes so much of its identity to the vitality of its African heritage, Brazil is determined to play its part in meeting this challenge.

Brazil has been actively involved in various bilateral and plurilateral initiatives aimed at fostering peace in parts of Africa and beyond. The examples provided by the establishment of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, as well as the effort towards the formation of a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons, speak for themselves. As a troop contributor to the peacekeeping operations in Angola and Mozambique, Brazil has shown its steadfast support for national reconciliation in those two sister nations. We will continue to favour an in-depth examination of the causes of conflict in Africa with a view to promoting durable peace and development in all parts of the continent.

In his thoughtful report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated,

> "Development is a human right, and the principal long-term objective of all countries in Africa." *(S/1998/318, para. 79)*

We agree with this statement and with his affirmation that

> "Development is also central to the prospects for reducing conflict in Africa." *(ibid.)*

A combination of internal and external factors, however, has placed Africa's efforts to overcome poverty at the mercy of chronic instability. The perverse by-products left by a tragic legacy of manipulation by outside Powers — foremost among which is the network of illicit arms trade — have paved the way for the many self-inflicted wounds of recent years, from Somalia to Rwanda and Sierra Leone. For some time, the vast majority of these conflicts seemed to be of an intra-State nature. More recently, however, the threat of transborder spillover has been placing the Security Council on a new level of alert. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of several worrisome signs of what could turn into a perilous new trend.

As the Security Council attempts to focus in a more effective manner on Africa, a sustained political commitment is required in order to prevent the fragile truce in many parts of the continent from reigniting into bloodier fighting. The Council must invest its moral authority and use its entire gamut of diplomatic resources to promote peace and stability. There are indications that the Council may be starting to respond. The establishment of a peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic can be seen as a positive development after three years of reluctance by the Council to authorize the deployment of peacekeepers on the continent. The United Nations operation that has been helping consolidate the peace process in Sierra Leone may be cited as further evidence of the Council's engagement in Africa.

In our view, the Council and the United Nations as a whole should intensify their work in at least two main areas.

Additional work is necessary to enhance the capacity of African States to develop their own mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. The countries in the region can achieve a great deal themselves with the attentive support and encouragement of the international community. In Guinea-Bissau, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries has been successfully working hand in hand with the Economic Community of West African States to normalize conditions in the country and avoid civil war. A ceasefire has been holding and could pave the way for further progress.

Secondly, the Security Council should also focus on the question of the illegal flow of arms in Africa and strengthen the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Council. The unabated flow of arms to Africa reduces the prospects for peace and squanders precious resources that could otherwise be put to the service of development. The decisions taken by the Council last week can be seen as positive steps in that direction.

These are areas that pertain legitimately to the Security Council's competence. In order to address the momentous task of eradicating the root causes of conflict in Africa we must also rely on the active involvement of other relevant United Nations bodies. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in particular, must discharge their responsibilities regarding the ideas in the Secretary-General's report that pertain to social and economic development.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to emphasize the need for an intense and urgent diplomatic

effort to reverse the present sombre scenario in Angola. The continued lack of observance of the Lusaka Protocol by Jonas Savimbi is simply unacceptable. The complete demilitarization of UNITA and the completion of the process of extension of State administration are essential conditions for the peace process to be put back on track. Savimbi's persistent defiance of Security Council decisions cannot be tolerated.

The United Nations continues to represent the best hope for millions of Africans who suffer the ravages of conflict, either as victims of landmines or as refugees and internally displaced persons, or even as the unwilling spectators of indiscriminate destruction and starvation. Let us pledge to work with those in Africa and outside it who — like Secretary-General Kofi Annan and like yourself, Madam President — believe that it is possible to transform the tragedy of Africa's recent past into a new reality — a new reality that will permit the brave people of this ancient land to enjoy the human security and the economic opportunities they seek and deserve.

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Mr. Tang Jiaxuan.

Mr. Tang Jiaxuan (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Since the first ministerial meeting of the Security Council on Africa was held in September of last year, the international community, including the United Nations, has shown greater interest in and attached greater importance to Africa. This is a new and gratifying development that should be recognized.

In recent years the overall situation in Africa has been moving towards relaxation. The pursuit of peace, stability, development and cooperation has become the mainstream in the development of the continent. Thanks to the positive efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other regional organizations, as well as the African countries concerned, some of the hot spots and conflicts have been resolved or alleviated. However, since last May local conflicts have broken out one after another in Africa, with adverse impacts on unity, stability, security and development in the regions and countries concerned, and arousing the anxiety and concern of the international community.

Given the great number of its countries, Africa is an important political force in international affairs that cannot be neglected. Endowed with abundant natural resources, it is a promising continent with limitless potential in international economic development. Peace and stability in Africa are part and parcel of peace, stability and development in the world. Without stability in Africa, there will be no global peace; without development in Africa, there will be no prosperity in the world. Members of the international community, and developed countries in particular, have an obligation to promote stability in Africa, and, more important, to help African countries to shake off poverty and developing their economy.

We are deeply concerned about the recent constant conflicts in Africa. It is our sincere hope that the relevant African countries will, in the spirit of national reconciliation, take into consideration the fundamental and long-term interests of their States and peoples, and properly settle their disputes through negotiations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, avoid conflicts, iron out their differences and join hands in a concerted effort to contribute to peace and stability in Africa.

We support African countries in their own choice of political systems and development paths in the light of their respective national conditions. As the conditions vary from one country to another, there is no ready and single model of development applicable to all African countries. Their own choice must be respected.

We are of the view that the Security Council has an inescapable responsibility and obligation to maintain peace and security in Africa. The United Nations should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with the OAU in resolving the conflicts in Africa. It should earnestly consider the reasonable propositions and legitimate demands of the African countries, and support their efforts to maintain regional peace and security and defend their State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Last April, Secretary-General Kofi Annan submitted a report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We appreciate his efforts to accelerate the settlement of the conflicts in Africa and to promote peace and development on the African continent.

We call upon the international community to further support and respect the efforts of the regional organizations of Africa to prevent and resolve conflicts, and to provide Africa's security and peacekeeping mechanism with the necessary material and financial

assistance, with no political conditions of any kind attached.

As one of the permanent members of the Security Council, China has always attached importance to peace and development in Africa. China has always stood by the African countries in their legitimate demands and reasonable propositions, supported their endeavours to maintain political stability and promote economic growth and their useful efforts aimed at enhancing African unity and regional cooperation. In recent years, China has actively supported the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. It sent a senior official to attend the United Nations high-level special conference on Sierra Leone and it has sent military observers to participate in the United Nations peacekeeping operation there. China is also ready to provide the African countries that are plagued by land mines with training and assistance in the area of landmine clearance, technology and equipment.

The world is now moving more rapidly towards multipolarity. Under these new circumstances, China will, as always, strengthen its friendly relations and cooperation with the African countries and make further contributions to the promotion of peace, stability and development in Africa.

To solve the many problems confronting Africa is not only a challenge to Africa and the whole international community, but also provides us with an opportunity. It is our hope that the international community will join African countries and people in an unremitting effort to promote peace, stability and development in Africa.

The President: I call on the Minister for External Relations and Worship of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Rojas López.

Mr. Rojas López (Costa Rica)(*interpretation from Spanish*): My country is taking part in this ministerial level meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa with particular interest and motivation. Sweden's acclaimed leadership and its traditional solidarity with the causes of the developing world have encouraged and spurred on the members of this Council to take a broad and constructive position in support of Africa. Likewise, our Secretary-General's firm commitment to this question has been a constant source of inspiration for a creative and determined approach to ways and means of lending international support to Africa.

In the year of work that has elapsed, the Security Council and the international community have advanced and developed a substantial common core of ideas in their view of the situation in Africa. First of all, we would note that our common approach is based on a comprehensive, concerted and committed consideration of the question. Secondly, we would highlight the happy fact that Africa's regional leadership in this regard is proving itself indispensable and decisive.

With respect to the comprehensive nature of the approach, the international community has understood that the problems in Africa are not isolated or unconnected. That has led us to see that in Africa the question of peace and security transcends traditional concepts and embraces a wide range of economic and social questions — above all, those relating to the observance of human rights. Any interpretation of the situation in Africa that tries to ignore or fragment this reality is simply unsound and baseless.

With respect to the importance of the concerted approach, no one can deny that dialogue must be the basic two-way instrument in solving Africa's problems. The sad lessons of daily life have taught us that violence has not resolved the disputes in Africa. No one could reasonably assert that resort to force has solved any of the serious problems besetting the peoples of the continent.

Quite the opposite, it is wars that have aggravated and spotlighted in all its starkness the human tragedy that millions of men and women of the region have had to face and survive. However, it has been and remains the Africans themselves who have demonstrated, with their own experience and commitment, that cooperation is a valid and legitimate instrument for solving problems and reconciling conflicting positions in shared ideals and objectives. There are myriad examples in that intractable region. Allow me to say that we in Costa Rica are learning from those Africans who have believed that it is possible, through concerted action, to solve the most pressing problems of developing societies.

In addition, this shared vision of the issues means that the international community cannot seek to impose outside solutions on African countries that are alien to their national and regional lives and experience. It is African men and women who, through their structures, must define and establish their own models for securing peace, development and respect for freedoms and rights.

On this basis, my country believes that it is essential to stress the need for cooperating countries and the international financial institutions to take new approaches in their relations with Africa. I do not need to dwell on the reasons why a new vision is needed for African countries that would take into account their exceptional situation and their own priorities and would seek to promote the building of genuine and sustainable peace.

In emphasizing this great future of understanding through cooperation, Costa Rica notes its concern about the abuse of the argument of self-defence to justify military actions against other African States. In this respect, Costa Rica agrees with the criteria by which, as expressed in other cases by the International Court of Justice, self-defence is a legitimate right only when military action is taken by one State, either directly or through armed groups with substantial support from that State, against another.

The conceptual heritage that the Security Council has developed this year also embraces the fundamental element of commitment. In connection with Africa, we all understand that the time for bombastic rhetoric is over and that what is needed is genuine commitment, allowing the development and implementation of specific proposals, mechanisms for action defined with the firm aim of responding to the great challenge of peace, development and coexistence with respect for fundamental guarantees.

In these months of tremendous political and technical work, the Security Council and the Secretariat have been able to identify specific responses to some of the important and pressing questions that we asked together on 25 September 1997. At this stage, we can affirm that our Organization possesses sufficient political will and commitment to tackle the challenge of supporting Africa. We know that this in itself is not enough and that we must now get down to work. This is our great challenge and the primary objective in the short and medium terms.

In this sense, Costa Rica wishes to stress the fact that the traditional concept prevailing in this Organization of the nature and character of peacekeeping missions, seen from the purely military point of view, has been stretched and expanded into a wider-reaching concept that includes political and humanitarian components. All of this should be seen from the standpoint that peace and security can be achieved, maintained, built upon and strengthened only through integrated, all-encompassing endeavours that go beyond the monitoring of cease-fires and include other elements vital to the process of transition from conflict to peace and democracy.

Having established the parametres for the role of the international community vis-à-vis Africa, it is also necessary to establish that, in this respect, regional leadership is the key political factor in the conduct of this great joint undertaking.

The magnitude of the problems to be resolved and the challenges to be faced requires African leaders to assume a creative, responsible and unbiased attitude. This is particularly true for the questions of importance to the Africans themselves: ensuring respect for all human rights, in particular for fundamental guarantees; the promotion of pluralistic and representative democracy; the rule of law; the existence of autonomous and efficient judicial institutions; the primacy of civilian power based on free and fair elections; demilitarization and the reduction of military spending; the promotion of sustainable human development, with particular emphasis on fighting poverty; and the development of broad educational models designed to achieve social mobility and to promote the genuine equality of men and women.

Within this vast undertaking, my delegation wishes to focus particular attention on the question of human rights and the issue of demilitarization and the reduction of military expenditure, matters that we have consistently stressed during the past two years of our Security Council membership.

With respect to human rights, we affirm that achieving the observance of and full respect for these must become a fundamental political objective, since violations lie at the heart of the conflicts besetting the African continent. These considerations are not alien to Africa's realities, precisely because Africa is a region of the developing world that has established one of the best legal frameworks in this regard.

We must say, rather, that respect for these rights should be the constant concern of the political leadership. That is why we applaud the recent decision of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity to begin negotiations on establishing regional jurisdictional institutions in this regard. Our own experience in Latin America has taught us that such structures are fundamental factors for guaranteeing respect for these rights, which are inherent in the human condition.

At the same time, my delegation believes that the Security Council must focus at this meeting on the question of demilitarization and the reduction of military

spending. I do not raise this matter lightly, but because it arises from our own national experience, which has taught us that a resolute policy to strengthen civilian power, based on free and pluralistic electoral processes and accompanied by clear decisions to reduce arms expenditures, yields only benefits because it bolsters democratic institutions and releases resources from state budgets that can be devoted to education, health, housing — in short, to social investment, which is the best promoter of peace and security, understood from a broad civilian and democratic perspective. The right innovative approach to support and international cooperation could serve to stimulate African countries to move in that direction.

My delegation has taken an active part in the tremendous amount of work done by the Working Group established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1170 (1998). Over these months, the Group has generated significant results and carried out its functions in the context of an evolving process. From this standpoint, we can claim to have completed an important stage, in which we have taken noteworthy decisions on such matters as support for regional and subregional initiatives; strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and peacekeeping; the effective enhancement of the sanctions regimes imposed by the Security Council; and the means available to Africa for peacekeeping.

Costa Rica will insist that that Group continue to work with the same intensity on the outstanding matters that it has itself defined. In particular, we attach priority to the questions relating to illicit arms-trafficking, security in refugee camps and zones and the means available to the Security Council to monitor the activities that it has authorized and that are carried out by Member States. We trust that in the remaining months of this year we shall be able to achieve tangible results in these areas and others.

At this crucial time, my delegation appeals to the international community to give its full support to the achievement of what the Council has resolved in the last few days on the question now before us. But we also ask the countries of Africa themselves to take responsibility and to show by deeds, as many have already done, their resolve and commitment to firm and lasting peace, true democracy and genuine human development.

The President: I thank the Minister for External Relations and Worship of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Hubert Védrine.

Mr. Védrine (France) (*interpretation from French*): A year ago we met to discuss Africa, on the initiative of Mrs. Albright, and asked the Secretary-General to present a report to us on this subject. The report contains many proposals and recommendations. The Security Council has already acted to take these recommendations forward. Several resolutions and presidential statements were adopted to that end on the initiative of the African delegations last week.

I would like to make a few short observations on the experience of the past year and the work that has been accomplished.

The number of conflicts on the continent remains high; it has actually risen. Conventional conflicts between States have not gone away, as evidenced by those in East Africa. The source of instability is most often internal, but the nature of these crises is such that they spread rapidly by generating and fuelling the movement of refugees, arms-trafficking, ethnic solidarity, guerrillas and foreign interference. This is the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular.

The contagious effect of these crises on the region warrants a greater role by the regional organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In this regard, I commend the African mediation effort led by President Bongo in the Central African Republic; that of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the crises in Liberia, Sierra Leone and, in cooperation with the community of Portuguese-speaking countries, in Guinea-Bissau; the efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for Somalia and southern Sudan; and those of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Security Council must retain primary responsibility for international peacekeeping and security operations, in Africa and elsewhere. The persevering efforts of the Secretary-General's special envoys and representatives in the settlement of several conflicts — tribute should be paid here to Maître Blondin Beye — and the presence in the field of observer missions and peacekeeping operations are evidence of the United Nations role. The Council was right, in spite of the bitter experiences of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in Somalia and the United Nations

Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in Rwanda, not to abdicate its responsibilities, and to establish last spring the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) for the Central African Republic and the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for Sierra Leone, and to try to maintain the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) in an effort to save the peace process in Angola.

The Secretary-General is right to insist on the need to give the Organization the financial, material and human resources needed for intervention. Peacekeeping cannot depend solely on shifting coalitions and optional financing. My country, for its part, will continue to make a major contribution, whether by participating directly in United Nations operations, such as MINURCA, in which 200 French soldiers are serving, or through a $40 million cooperation programme to strengthen the peacekeeping capabilities of the African countries.

Good coordination between the United Nations and the very positive actions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — and I welcome what was said here by its current Chairman, President Blaise Compaoré — and subregional organizations takes on special importance in this context. The Security Council adopted a welcome resolution on this matter on 17 September. MINURCA and UNOMSIL are a good illustration of positive interaction between the United Nations and regional initiatives. The former has taken over from an inter-African force, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), in order to consolidate its achievements with a broader mandate. The latter is supporting a regional force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). In Africa, as elsewhere, the Security Council must of course retain control of the operations it authorizes, in accordance with its responsibilities.

The particular nature of the present conflicts calls for a comprehensive approach. The regional crisis involving six or seven States on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrates the need for an international conference on peace in the Great Lakes region which would permit all the protagonists to address and try to resolve together the problems of security, refugees and minorities and to lay the groundwork for regional cooperation. I think that this idea is gaining ground. France hopes that the countries concerned will commit themselves to this path, and it will support all efforts in that direction.

With regard to refugees, the Secretary-General is right to say that it is essential at one and the same time to guarantee their rights and safety, ensure the security of the countries which receive them and prevent the refugees from being used by one or another party as a pretext for political or military action.

Similarly, illegal flows of arms are helping to transform many tensions into armed confrontation and to maintain a climate of insecurity. Our Council must continue to urge the supplier countries and the users to show restraint and to try to enhance the effectiveness of Security Council arms embargoes, which recent history shows too often remain a dead letter.

In the long run, the only way to prevent these conflicts will be to build, consolidate and bring out of crisis States governed by the rule of law, capable of convincing their citizens to settle their conflicts from this point on by peaceful and lawful means, not by arms or violence. The Secretary-General made this point very well. This presupposes clear-cut rules, the maintenance of order in a way that respects democracy, and a judicial system that operates fairly. One of the keys to progress here lies in the successful combination of recognizing the legal role of the majority and respecting the rights of minorities.

The Secretary-General also rightly emphasizes the imperative need for sustainable economic and social development. How can one not be worried by the sharp reduction in aid to Africa we have seen in the past few years? Development assistance remains a vital complement to the policies pursued by the African countries. This concerns, in particular, the least developed countries, three-quarters of which are in Africa.

For its part, France will maintain its official development assistance. It devotes nearly 0.5 per cent of its gross national product to such aid — $6.3 billion in 1997 — and ranks second among the donor countries. Half of this official aid goes to Africa. France has consistently pleaded the case for easing the debt burden and has acted to do so. France and its European Union partners have also worked for a long time to obtain broader access to world trade for the African countries. The choice does not have to be between aid and commerce. Both are indispensable.

The developing countries, especially those which have opened up, commendably, to world trade and international financial flows, are the first to be hurt in the present financial turmoil. No industrialized country today

could have developed under such conditions. Compliance with a number of rules, which is essential, and the establishment of protective mechanisms should benefit them first and foremost. The African countries should not be the first victims of disorders that started elsewhere. This concern inspired the proposals France is presenting for the reform of the international financial and monetary system.

When the Secretary-General presented his report in this very Chamber, he insisted, rightly, on the indispensable political resolve which must be demonstrated by the African countries, and also by the rest of the international community, in order to resolve Africa's problems. France shares this conviction and hopes that the Secretary-General's call will be heard.

France is confident in the future of Africa, and confirms the continuity of its commitment.

The President: I call on the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Gabon, His Excellency Mr. Casimir Oye Mba.

Mr. Oye Mba (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): First, I would like to say how delighted I am that this special meeting of the Security Council on Africa is taking place under your presidency, Madam. Your country, Sweden, has always shown great interest and particular sensitivity to the problems of third world countries in general, and particularly those of Africa.

Secondly, I would like to say that I fully associate myself with the statement just made on behalf of Africa by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso.

A year ago, on 25 September 1997, the Security Council, on the initiative of the delegation of the United States of America, which at the time occupied the presidency of the Council, met in this Chamber at the level of Foreign Ministers to consider the appropriateness of concerted international action to promote peace and security in Africa.

That welcome new initiative arose from the Security Council's interest in Africa, which, given its situation, requires more than ever before the support of the entire international community to meet the challenges it is facing.

The Secretary-General's thorough and very accurate report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa provides an objective analysis of the situation. It also has the merit of formulating some action-oriented recommendations.

Here I wish to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has shown himself worthy of the confidence placed in him by the international community, and in particular by his continent.

My country, as the Council knows, chairs the ad hoc working group established by the Security Council. Thus, I welcome the positive reactions to the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report. I venture to hope that the results of these deliberations, some of which have already been adopted by the Security Council in the form of resolutions and presidential statements, will mark an important advance towards concrete action.

Such action, to my mind, should, *inter alia*, be aimed at strengthening arms embargoes; stemming illicit flows of small arms; resolving the question of transnational populations; supporting countries that receive massive flows of refugees; strengthening African capacity for peacekeeping; and coordination between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and African regional organizations in the area of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace.

On the subject of prevention, I welcome the reflection of that concern in resolution 1197 (1998), adopted by the Security Council on 18 September 1998.

Concerning Central Africa, the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, meeting in Libreville from 28 to 30 April 1998, reconsidered the idea of an early warning mechanism as an instrument for crisis and conflict prevention. At that time, we reiterated the imperative need for the speedy establishment of this structure, pursuant to the decision taken by the heads of State and Government of Central Africa.

As current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I welcome the fact that this idea is now enjoying the support and favourable attention of the international community. On behalf of our 11 member countries, I wish to express solemn thanks to the countries and other donors that have contributed to the special fund set up in that respect, especially Japan, the United States of America, Germany, the United Nations and the OAU.

Gabon, for its part, is currently making every effort to establish the logistical conditions that will make it possible for this future early warning mechanism to have its headquarters in Libreville. But to bring this project to fulfilment we still need the full assistance of the international community.

In order to create unity and make their armies operational for future peacekeeping missions, the member States of the Committee have decided to organize joint military exercises to simulate peacekeeping activities.

Accordingly, a delegation of representatives of the member States of the Committee, led by Gabon's Minister of Defence, was received in June, here in New York, by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He assured them that the United Nations would provide assistance for implementation of this plan. A number of partners of countries from our subregion also expressed their interest in this idea.

Finally, for the first time in the annals of the Committee, from 18 to 21 May 1998 we held, in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, a conference on the problem of the relationship between democratic institutions and peace in Central Africa. That meeting brought together within a single forum members of Governments, representatives of opposition parties, senior police officers, representatives of civil society and experts on questions of political freedom, freedom of the press and human rights. At the end of that conference, the participants recommended, *inter alia*, the establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa. That body would be responsible for dealing with questions of common interest with the aim of reinforcing confidence-building measures and subregional peace. It would also act as a mechanism for dialogue and for the promotion of values relevant to the democratic experiences of Central Africa.

While this special meeting of the Security Council is taking place, a special summit of heads of State of Central Africa is meeting with President Bongo in Libreville to seek a peaceful solution to recent crises and conflicts besetting our subregion, in particular the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Need I stress that the holding of that summit in Libreville, in the wake of so many other round tables, talks, mediation efforts and peace negotiations, is the result of the relations of trust and friendship that President Bongo and Gabon have always tried to maintain with all of our neighbours.

Far from constituting any kind of competition, these initiatives seek rather to complement the many efforts being made jointly in the area of conflict prevention, management and settlement by the United Nations and the OAU, as well as by the subregional organizations.

All of these political actions cannot alone guarantee durable peace and security in Africa if they are not accompanied by steps in favour of economic and social development, because poverty, misery and despair are often the real cause behind the turmoil that we see breaking out in various places.

That is why my delegation believes in the need for coordination between the various bodies of the United Nations and the international financial institutions in order to give a comprehensive response to the Secretary-General's important report.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that, beyond mere declarations of intent, the ideas that emerge from our debates in the ad hoc working group and the Security Council will lead to concrete and timely decisions and actions.

The President: I thank the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Gabon for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia, His Excellency Mr. Momodou Lamin Sedat Jobe.

Mr. Jobe (Gambia): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, on your country's assumption of the presidency for this month. I think this a happy coincidence, when we consider the role that your country has played since the years of independence in monitoring and participating in not only the independence process of Africa but also all the cooperation linked to humanitarian moves on the continent. We are therefore convinced that the delegation of Sweden will bring much wisdom and experience to guiding the work of the Council.

We would also like to commend the delegation of Slovenia for the way in which it steered the activities of the Council last month.

My delegation would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his report on Africa in response to the request of the Council, which was made last

September. We find that the report provides a clear, candid and balanced analysis of the sources of conflict in Africa, and that the Secretary-General's surgical analysis of Africa's problems is not only frank but also thought-provoking; it poses significant challenges for all of us in our quest to assemble the means to implement its recommendations.

As Africans, we are deeply saddened by the present plight of the African continent and its peoples. Africa is rich in resources and culture, yet, paradoxically, the peoples of the continent continue to suffer greatly. It has gone from slavery to colonization and from independence to untold economic hardship, now exacerbated by civil wars in many parts. Today, quite a number of African States are victims of armed conflicts, while the great majority of the African people languish in abject poverty, desolation, decay and cruel separation. Over 8 million of its people are refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. Over 30 wars have been fought in the continent since 1970.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that we, the African people, should not look beyond ourselves for responsibility for our present situation. However, several external factors contributed significantly to it. Now that we are taking stock, we and all those external actors with whom we are jointly responsible for the present plight of Africa and its people should acknowledge our joint responsibility and join hands in our search for an African renaissance.

In dealing with the complex conflict situations in Africa, it is not enough to address the symptoms of conflict. We must tackle the root causes themselves. This will therefore require a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the long-term, structural causes of conflict. It should involve the entire United Nations, and a system of coordinating all the efforts should be set up so that practical actions can be taken by the United Nations and its agencies.

The United Nations has registered numerous successes in Africa of late. The severe failures of the past should not inhibit us from living up to our responsibilities. The failure in Somalia was a bitter experience, but inaction in Rwanda and elsewhere is even worse. The failure to act in the face of serious threats to peace, security and human lives in Africa threatens the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council itself.

We must not let the Rwandan situation repeat itself elsewhere. The Council must act where and when it should. It is no longer justifiable — if it ever was — to use financial cost, or fear of it, as a guiding principle for intervention. In order to avert humanitarian catastrophes, intervention is often necessary. The United Nations should therefore consider ways of providing the necessary resources for peacekeeping operations so that they can take place very rapidly.

The United Nations should enhance its capacity for early action. It must be capable of responding swiftly to conflict situations if catastrophes are to be avoided. It is good to have early warning systems. However, such systems will be meaningless, if not useless, if they are not complemented by early action.

The enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity is a key priority. My delegation welcomes the initiatives by several States in this regard. We encourage increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation in peacekeeping, especially in capacity-building, in order to enhance African preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

Regional and subregional organizations can play an important role in the prevention of conflict and in peacekeeping. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), has excelled itself in Liberia and Sierra Leone. We also recognize the efforts of other subregional organizations in Africa in this regard. As members know, ECOWAS was recently involved in the Guinea-Bissau process, which is continuing.

We therefore look to collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa. This could create a partnership more suitable for dealing with some conflict situations in Africa. In this context, we welcome the recent high-level meeting held in New York between the United Nations and regional organizations on this issue.

We must, however, emphasize at this point that it is imperative to avoid relegating responsibility for peacekeeping from a global level to regional or subregional levels on a selective basis. The Security Council cannot subcontract its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — not even by default. Cooperation between the United Nations and subregional and regional organizations must be in accordance with Articles 53 and 54 of the Charter.

Economic sanctions may be suitable in some instances for securing the compliance of States with international norms. They are, however, a very blunt instrument — I will return to that issue in my conclusion. We have seen numerous cases in which they have caused severe humanitarian difficulties. We share the view that sanctions should now be better targeted, that they should be designed in a such a way that innocent people — especially the most vulnerable groups of society, in particular, women and children — are not adversely affected. Therefore, the Council should always consider and provide for humanitarian exemptions.

My colleagues have already spoken about various issues, including the problems of arms in Africa, the situation of children in war zones and all that is necessary to protect refugees. We believe that we cannot overemphasize — I will not repeat what my colleagues have said, but my comments can be found in the text of my statement — the importance of the United Nations and the leading role that it is playing in the community of nations. If Africa today depends on the United Nations, and looks for its cooperation and for a vibrant relationship with it, it does so in order to avoid any misunderstandings or any conflicts between this body and the regional bodies. I therefore believe that in the quest for solutions to bring about peace, and to resolve certain economic problems, we should carefully analyse some of the echoes that come to us from the regional organizations.

It is for that reason that I would not like us to underestimate the efforts that have been made by the United Kingdom and the United States with the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to arrive at a *modus operandi*. If an agreement has already been made for a third venue, the human mind is capable of flexibility and understanding. I do not think that we should be in positions that are fixed. We should try as one community of nations, this United Nations, under the same roof, to allow leeway and have understanding, which can maintain the dignity of all.

It is for this reason that I still believe that great nations such as the United Kingdom and the United States can understand the human aspect that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is requesting and that those conditions, when met, will enable us to put the situation right. We will be able to see all countries join the same community. The continent of Africa, as well as the Organization of African Unity, will be very grateful if its conclusions are understood. It would be disastrous if the Organization were to take a decision which was binding on its Members and the Security Council were to take another decision which it wanted to impose on others. That misunderstanding will make us go back in time, and I do not feel we have the right either to erode the responsibilities and the authority of the Council or, at the same time, to ignore the feelings of some of our regional brothers.

I therefore appeal once again to Great Britain and to the United States to reconsider the matter and give some leeway that will enable us to reach a *modus operandi*.

In conclusion, the Security Council and the United Nations are the guarantors of all the hopes and aspirations for development and progress not only of Africa, but of all the nations of the world and of humanity as a whole. That responsibility calls for humanism, understanding and cooperation.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Masahiko Koumura.

Mr. Koumura (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I should like to express my appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. Hjelm-Wallén, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who, in her capacity as President, has convened this meeting of the Council. It is of great significance that today, under her leadership, the international community is meeting once again to devote its attention to consideration of the problems confronting Africa.

Today, with the globalization of economic activities and in the midst of world social integration in terms of, for example, the environment and human rights, the world is about to enter into a completely new era for humankind, requiring that we respond as a global community to problems arising in the political, economic and social fields. What role will Africa, which embraces more than a quarter of the Member States of the United Nations and accounts for 13.1 per cent of the world's population, play in the world of the twenty-first century? This is a question requiring the urgent attention of the United Nations as it stands at the threshold of the new century. African conflicts represent 70 per cent of the items on the Security Council's agenda. In 1996, of the 53 countries in Africa, 14 were affected by conflict and more than 8 million of its people had become refugees. Therefore, if we are to realize peace and prosperity

throughout the world we cannot neglect this situation. Addressing African problems is indeed an urgent task for the international community.

Recognizing the urgency and importance of this situation, last year the Security Council convened a meeting at the ministerial level. As requested by the Security Council, the Secretary-General has analysed the sources of African conflicts and, on that basis, has made broad recommendations of policies for the prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as policies for durable peace and sustainable development. We now have the opportunity to enunciate our own commitment to Africa and engage in an earnest debate, again at the ministerial level, on the various issues presented in the Secretary-General's report and on how the Security Council, as well as the United Nations as a whole, should deal with them.

The issues of conflict prevention and development in Africa are inextricably related. Thus, I should like to stress that in the presidential statement it will issue today, the Security Council must make clear its determination that in considering conflict prevention and post-conflict economic and social development, it will return to an analysis of the root causes of the conflicts and address the situation in Africa from a comprehensive approach that encompasses the political, economic and social fields. At the same time, I should also point out that coping with these African problems will entail a long process, of which today's meeting of the Security Council is but one step.

Based on the initiatives of the African countries themselves, it is essential, first of all, that we work for the solution of economic and social problems which are the root causes of conflicts; secondly, when conflicts do unfortunately break out, that we promptly promote the political peace process; and, thirdly, that we prepare the foundation for post-conflict social integration and economic development. It is hoped that the international community as a whole will cooperate, spiritually as well as materially, as partners in devising a framework to ensure that the efforts of the African countries are effective. Thus, what is expected of us today is that we draw up concrete proposals containing the necessary strategic framework by which the United Nations, including the Security Council, can address that goal over the long term.

I am confident that a bright future awaits Africa. With an awareness of the problems which I have just mentioned, but also with an optimistic outlook for the future of Africa, Japan has been taking initiatives since the beginning of this decade to promote a new development strategy which takes into consideration the inseparability of conflict and development. In this connection, Japan has sought to realize South-South cooperation based on this new development strategy since 1993, when it hosted the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and in convening two Asia-Africa forums, in Bandung in 1994 and in Bangkok in 1997. Moreover, it is working in various African countries, including the Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso, to arrange cooperation between those countries and other donor countries towards the application of the new development strategy on that continent. Building on the results of these efforts, Japan will next month host the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II).

Most recently, in January, we hosted the Tokyo International Conference on Preventive Strategy to devise a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention, bearing in mind the situation in Africa.

At the January Tokyo Conference, seven specific policy proposals were put forward. For example, it was suggested that a conceptual framework for a preventive strategy encompassing the United Nations, regional organizations, Member States and civil society should be elaborated. It was also proposed that importance be placed on efforts to construct democratic communities with full respect for human rights, and to eradicate poverty, based on the recognition that economic and social development and the well-being of people are prerequisites for conflict prevention. Moreover, the report of the Tokyo Conference recommended measures which the United Nations and regional organizations might take immediately, including those relating to the enhancement of Africa's preventive capacity, especially its early-warning capability, and the effective monitoring of the accumulation and transfer of small arms into conflict areas.

In view of the fact that approximately 20 African countries have now attained annual economic growth rates of more than 5 per cent, it is anticipated that a plan of action will be adopted at the second Tokyo Conference in order to apply the new development strategy to Africa. Along with social and economic development, that plan of action should point out the importance of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction in securing the stability which is the very foundation of development. Mentioned as measures to be taken towards that end are those that aim at ensuring a shift from emergency assistance extended in the midst of a conflict to assistance

for rehabilitation and for the safety of refugees. Moreover, in addition to vocational training and the social reintegration of demobilized combatants and refugees, we expect the international community to recognize the importance of actions aimed at restricting the illegal transfer of small arms, which, particularly in Africa, poses one of the greatest obstacles to the maintenance of social stability in pre-conflict as well as in post-conflict situations.

Japan believes it is important for African countries to draw up such new strategies for addressing development and conflict issues in the form of specific national plans, and to move ahead with their implementation. For that purpose, Japan would like to further its efforts, in cooperation with those Governments, as well as with other donors and the United Nations, to crystallize those strategies, taking into account the views spontaneously offered by countries that have become model cases. Japan considers its cooperation for Africa to be part of a comprehensive strategy to address the problems of conflicts and development which we are discussing today in the Security Council. It hopes that its own initiatives will play a role as catalyst in actualizing this strategy, which in turn will solidify a strategic and ongoing partnership among the countries of Africa, the international community and the various bodies of the United Nations.

With this awareness of the present situation surrounding African issues, Japan will work to ensure that they are addressed comprehensively by the United Nations. But it also intends to serve as a catalyst as the international community, and particularly the United Nations, deals with them. Japan is determined to continue its efforts in cooperation with other like-minded countries.

Finally, with the permission of the representative of China, who is present here today, I would like to introduce a proverb of Mencius, that great Chinese sage of the third century B.C. His message, freely translated, was that natural advantages are more valuable than heaven-sent opportunities, but even more valuable than natural advantages are unity and cooperation among people. In relating this proverb to the African challenges confronting us today, I would say that now is the time for Member States, including African countries, African regional organizations and the United Nations system as a whole to gather all their strength and cooperate to achieve genuine progress. Thus, I will conclude my remarks with an appeal to the international community to join together and take up the historic challenge that is before us, namely the achievement of peace and development in Africa.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

I call now on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Bomaya Godana, M.P.

Mr. Godana (Kenya): The Security Council is today gathered in a special ministerial meeting to deliberate important issues on Africa. This is the second time that the Council has done so, following last year's September meeting, at which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a comprehensive assessment of the African situation.

Last April, when the Secretary-General submitted his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, Kenya warmly welcomed it. We once again pay tribute to the Secretary-General for being pragmatic, objective and bold in his presentation and analysis of the current situation and the way forward.

The report sets out a multifaceted and practical set of recommendations for action by the international community, the Security Council included. In his own words, the Secretary-General wished the report to form the beginning of a new relationship between the United Nations and Africa. He has in this spirit challenged us all, both individually and collectively, as organizations and as States, to take the cue and seek to create a new beginning that is results-oriented, productive and meaningful, and one that is designed to resolve the current unhealthy situation.

One of the most enduring truths that permeates the report from beginning to end is the intrinsic linkage between peace and development. This is an idea that we in Africa are happy to see reflected in the report. I am happy to note that the report is receiving positive consideration by many bodies within the United Nations system. In this regard, we welcome paragraph 2 of resolution 1170 (1998), in which the Security Council

> "Stresses that the challenges in Africa demand a comprehensive response and, in this context, expresses the hope that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, other relevant bodies of the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and other relevant organizations, as well as Member States will consider the report and its

recommendations and take action as they deem appropriate within their respective areas of competence".

In order to succeed in building a framework for enduring peace and stability in Africa, we call upon the international community to support the African people in strengthening the region's economic and social foundations by providing assistance for development.

In the recent past, many have doubted the resolve of the United Nations in its commitment to Africa. In the area of conflict-prevention, major omissions in the early 1990s occurred that left an unfortunate experience with respect to Africa. The intervention in Somalia and the non-intervention in Rwanda were recently followed by the Council's hesitation to intervene in the former Zaire and in Congo (Brazzaville). That these unfortunate omissions took place in the post-cold-war era, when the Security Council had a much freer hand in deploying forces and when Africa was more and more taking tangible and positive steps in settling its disputes, is to be regretted. It is my fervent hope that the current reassessment by this Council with regard to its Charter obligations will make it possible for the Council to avoid such moments of indecisiveness when faced with similar situations in the future. We urge the Council to establish clear criteria for authorizing peacekeeping and enforcement action whenever situations arise, regardless of their geographical locations.

Since the early 1990s, African States have embarked on important first steps in instituting far-reaching political reforms. Many have held free and fair elections. But a lot more is needed in order to comprehensively promote and enhance the process of democratization. In his report, the Secretary-General has encouraged African Governments to boldly institute the necessary steps in this direction. This is an important challenge for African States as they seek to establish firm structures that would ensure respect for human rights, the rule of law and transparent and accountable leadership.

The uprooting of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians from their homes in the Great Lakes region has been a preoccupation for us for quite some time now. Africa today has the highest number of refugees and internally displaced persons. The problem of forced displaced population in Africa is real. It is a problem of grave concern not only from a human rights and humanitarian standpoint, but also because, by virtue of its sheer regional dimension, it constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Since 1994, forced population displacements in the Great Lakes region have continued to send ominous reverberations across the entire continent. A proportion of that displaced population constitutes what is now being referred to as armed labour.

Kenya is concerned that despite the evident danger that this problem of forced population displacement in the region portends, no meaningful action has been taken by the international community in seeking to resolve this crisis in a comprehensive manner since it emerged in 1994. I am glad to note that the Secretary-General wisely raised this issue in his report. I wish to challenge the members of the Council, as well as all members of the international community — as individuals, States or organizations — to summon sufficient political will to deal with this problem once and for all.

Another important issue of concern to Kenya is the problem regarding the illicit flow of arms. The Secretary-General rightly identifies the flow of illicit arms to Africa and in Africa as one of the greatest challenges that faces the international community in addressing conflicts and their prevention there. Today, Africa accounts for the largest accumulation of small arms circulating worldwide. There is therefore an urgent need to respond to this situation in a comprehensive manner, as it affects the security, political independence and social and economic development of many African countries. In this connection, we join those that support the holding of an international conference on all aspects of the illicit arms trade at the earliest possible opportunity, for the stemming of this menace can be met effectively only within a global framework. In this regard, we are encouraged by the statement made by the representatives of the United States and France.

It is evident that to succeed in building a framework for enduring peace and stability in Africa, the international community must work together with the African peoples to strengthen the region's economic and social foundations. In this context, assistance for development is an indispensable complement to the policies of African States and needs to be made sufficient and effective.

At present, Africa's total debt is about $350 billion. We believe that a more realistic and holistic policy on debt is urgently needed. The appeal by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock for the poorest countries in Africa deserves serious consideration. Steps should also

be taken to increase market access for African exports through the removal of trade barriers and other protectionist policies. We welcome the positive remarks made by some colleagues today on this important issue.

Since the holding of the first special ministerial meeting on this question in September 1997, new, specific issues have been added to the African agenda. The resurgence of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is of grave concern to us, particularly in view of its impact on the region's stability. We believe that a comprehensive approach to this conflict is needed in order to resolve it.

The border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea is another situation which worries us, as it could easily destabilize the entire Horn of Africa once again. We call on Ethiopia and Eritrea to use peaceful means to resolve their dispute and to desist from resorting to force, and in this regard, we urge them to cooperate with the OAU mediation initiative.

Other issues that deserve urgent attention are the internal conflict in Guinea-Bissau and the fragile situation in Angola.

We are deeply concerned that the number of conflict situations in Africa is going up instead of decreasing. We pledge to work closely with others in the search for peaceful solutions to all these conflicts.

Finally, the bombing incidents that took place in Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa last month are a telling reminder that the scourge of terrorism is a problem that concerns not only other regions but Africa as well. In the Kenya incident alone, 257 of our people have died and over 5,000 have suffered debilitating injuries, such as permanent loss of sight or hearing. The cost of repairing some 70 buildings and the infrastructure which were devastated as a result of the incident is now estimated at over $500 million. Acts of terrorism, for whatever ideology or justification, should not and cannot be tolerated. We call for concerted international efforts aimed at an early conclusion of a comprehensive international convention for combating terrorism. In this regard, the suggestion to hold a world conference on terrorism should be seriously explored.

In connection with this subject, we welcome the positive development in the Lockerbie case and look forward to its earliest possible finalization by way of the commencement of a fair trial in the chosen neutral country and the lifting of sanctions on the country of Libya.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, His Excellency Mr. Jaime Gama.

Mr. Gama (Portugal)(*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): Portugal has already had the opportunity to state in the Security Council its support for the remarkable report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. I would like to reiterate emphatically that the Portuguese Government is ready to support fully and actively the role of the United Nations in forging a new and more dynamic relationship with Africa.

It is up to us all, as Members States of the United Nations, to turn from words to deeds if we really wish to contribute to freeing Africa from economic underdevelopment and to help the peoples of Africa to maintain their steady pace towards democracy and good governance. Africa gives us several good examples of this, such as Mozambique and Cape Verde, which encourage us to act according to the proposals correctly identified by the Secretary-General.

The common pursuit of peace and development in Africa presupposes the existence of a corresponding political will on the part of all actors in this process. Portugal will play its part in all international forums, including the United Nations system and the European Union. We are committed to bringing to fruition the holding of a Europe-Africa summit during the Portuguese presidency of the European Union in the year 2000.

In harmony with the Secretary-General's report, Portugal agrees that weapons proliferation is one of the most devastating scourges currently affecting Africa. We should mobilize our collective efforts effectively to overcome this problem. Portugal agrees that much more has to be done to stop the flow of weapons, particularly small arms, across borders and from conflict to conflict. We believe that it would be useful to reduce defence budgets in Africa wherever possible, as well as to carry out a reassessment of the objectives of bilateral military cooperation programmes with developed countries.

In this context, let me underline that Portugal has already adopted legislation making the violation of

Security Council arms embargoes a criminal offence. I would also note the importance we attribute to resolution 1196 (1998), recently approved by the Council.

In my statement here last year, I indicated that Portugal would respond to the need to make available greater resources for United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. We were part of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique and of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission in Angola, where we continue to participate in the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola. We are also present in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic.

Portugal has been one of the most active European Union countries participating in peacekeeping operations in Africa and is committed, to the best of its abilities, to responding positively to the needs of the United Nations.

On another level, we recognize the unique role that the Organization of African Unity and African subregional organizations should have in both conflict prevention and conflict resolution in Africa. Therefore we support the recommendations of the Secretary-General pointing to closer coordination between the United Nations and those organizations. In this context, resolution 1197 (1998), adopted last week, is a step in the right direction.

However, we should bear in mind that the final responsibility to authorize the use of force to restore peace always belongs to the Security Council.

As a member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) — an organization principally composed of African countries — Portugal is in a position, through that organization, to provide an effective contribution to the resolution of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau, a country with which we share many close ties of cooperation. We believe that the mediation of this conflict, currently being carried out jointly by the CPLP jointly with the Economic Community of West African States, is a good example of how two international organizations can work towards the same goal — the peaceful and negotiated settlement of a conflict — taking into account their respective vocations and specifications.

Often, the tasks of peace consolidation are as difficult as those of peace enforcement or conflict prevention. This may require a sustained and prolonged effort on the part of the international community. We fully share the views expressed by the Secretary-General on the importance of post-conflict peace-building as, in his own words,

> "actions undertaken at the end of a conflict to consolidate peace and prevent a recurrence of armed confrontation" *(S/1998/318, para. 63)*.

We sincerely hope the Security Council will avoid an overly narrow perspective of its own competencies with regard to this matter and discuss it with the seriousness it deserves.

We believe that the elements of peacebuilding should be clearly identified and integrated, from the outset, into the mandates of peacekeeping operations. This is one of the lessons we have learned from our participation in the United Nations missions in Angola and Mozambique.

The humanitarian and human rights components of peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peace-building are other elements to which we attach particular importance. To that end, we are ready to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General, stressing in particular the following: measures to increase the security of refugee camps, possibly the most visible consequence of the conflicts that have plagued the African continent; the expansion of the concept of children as "zones of peace", and here I would underline the expectations we have with regard to the pilot experiment in Sierra Leone; and the proposal that special human rights missions be funded from assessed contributions to the United Nations.

A word also is needed to reiterate the importance we attribute to the promotion of good governance and sustainable development in Africa, equally vital components of the way in which we see the possible paths to overcoming the problems faced by that continent. Let me recall the wise words of the Chairman of the OAU here last year, when he affirmed that

> "it is also true that the seed of democracy cannot germinate, let alone thrive, in the soil of mass poverty, illiteracy, hunger and disease." *(S/PV.3875, p. 32)*

The international community should provide appropriate assistance to the efforts of the Africans themselves to overcome these problems. Portugal has taken concrete steps in that direction by carrying out a global reform of the mechanisms of official development

assistance in order to adapt them to the current needs of aid for development. From 1996 to 1997, Portugal was the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development country that registered the greatest proportional increase in its official development assistance — 27 per cent. But Portugal's most significant contribution to economic growth in Africa should be seen in the increase of our flow of trade with several African countries, the opening of our markets to African exports and the increase in Portuguese investment in the continent.

The wounds that affect Africa are particularly deep in certain parts of the continent. Some of these, as in the case of Sudan and Somalia, are longstanding and do not show any signs of improvement. Others are more recent and could spread out of control to infect others, with unforeseeable consequences. We feel concerned at the resurgence of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we appeal for a political solution based on respect for international law and the territorial integrity of that country. We are also concerned at the instability still prevailing in other areas of the Great Lakes, as well as in other regions such as Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The current impasse in the peace process in Angola causes us profound apprehension in Portugal. We will persevere, alone as well as with the troika, which met this morning at the ministerial level in New York, and in close cooperation with the United Nations, to seek a political settlement to the problem, in strict accordance with the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The prolonged instability in Angola clearly shows that, in the final analysis, peace or war depend on the political will of the parties in situations of conflict.

As a final note, I should like to emphasize this last point. All the proposals and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General have as a fundamental presupposition — I would even say a *sine qua non* condition — the political will of the international community and of individual States; the will to choose tougher roads, despite their difficulty; the will to transform rhetoric into reality; the will to choose peace and development, instead of war and selfish interests. In sum, the will to change the state of affairs. The very comprehensive approach towards Africa recommended by the Secretary-General relies on an act of will on the part of the international community as a whole. We hope that we are all up to this great challenge.

The President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Unfortunately, we must state that the flames of war continue to blaze throughout Africa. In the past year their number has even increased. We are concerned that internal political crises are having a destabilizing effect on the situation in entire regions.

In recent months the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General have done a considerable amount of work to identify the causes of conflicts in the African continent. It is clear that the way to settle them lies first of all in overcoming chronic political, ethnic and socio-economic problems.

Clearly, there exist no quick and radical remedies that could resolve problems of such magnitude. It will take comprehensive and painstaking joint efforts on the part of Africa's friends and the Africans themselves in order to break the famous vicious circle: underdevelopment, social problems, political and military instability, conflicts and failed development programmes.

It is encouraging that we have come to this meeting with certain positive results behind us. The documents specifying the tasks that stem from the recommendations presented in the Secretary-General's April report on the causes of conflicts and promotion of peace and development in Africa have been prepared and agreed upon. We support the proposals that the Council resume its informal discussion of the progress made in the implementation of decisions taken today in December, following the submission of the Secretary-General's report on that issue.

But I cannot fail to take note of the significant increase in activity by the Africans themselves. The activities of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations for conflict prevention and resolution demonstrate Africans' readiness and determination to assume greater responsibility for solving their problems.

There is no doubt that without secure and lasting resolution of local conflicts there is no guarantee that African countries will truly embark on the road to sustainable and dynamic development and their complete integration into the world economy. The establishment of an effective pan-African system geared to both conflict prevention and resolution and the comprehensive implementation of post-conflict rehabilitation objectives should be a key element of the strategy for reinforcing peace. We also consider it important to encourage in

every possible way the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to function at full capacity.

We think that the Africans' efforts should be supported by the authority and capacities of the United Nations. The issue is not to be regarded as a substitution for the efforts of the Africans themselves, but rather as mutually reinforcing cooperation and assistance on the part of the United Nations and other organizations and countries in establishing pan-African peace-building mechanisms.

In addition, we consider it important to actively use the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage regional organizations to show greater initiative in the field of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This presupposes the expansion of the practice of regional peace-building operations backed by the Security Council.

At the same time, of course, Charter-stipulated principles regarding the role of the Security Council in launching peacekeeping operations should be complied with. Military operations conducted by regional structures, especially those involving the use of force, are permissible only if they are explicitly authorized by the Security Council. This incontestable rule applies also to the actions of coalition forces formed on an ad hoc basis.

Russia intends to render every possible assistance to resolving the problems of the African continent, working in tandem with those countries with which we have traditionally maintained friendly, partnership relations. Africa has been and continues to be an area of priority concern for us.

Along with the activities carried out within the framework of the United Nations, we are considering various options regarding how to broaden our practical involvement in strengthening the Africans' peace-building potential — first of all in such areas as transport and technical support of humanitarian relief projects and training rescue team members and personnel for peacekeeping operations. Mindful of the concern many African countries have with regard to the problem of mines, we are ready to provide our expert services in demining, in particular in Angola, Mozambique and Egypt. We have submitted our proposals on these and a number of other issues to the United Nations Secretariat. We will provide data for the United Nations database now under development regarding on our capabilities to train peacekeepers. We are open to proposals on other possible joint projects that could make use of Russia's capabilities.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Boris Frlec.

Mr. Frlec (Slovenia): Slovenia welcomes the opportunity to discuss the situation in Africa in the Security Council at the ministerial level under the excellent leadership of the Swedish Presidency. One of the turning points in the history of the modern world and the United Nations was the process of African decolonization. This development changed the face of the world and captured the imagination of a new generation of world leaders. It advanced the belief in racial equality, individual liberty and in the right of all peoples to self-determination. The United Nations, therefore, cannot in good conscience fail to address the current challenges facing Africans as they strive to restore their proud past and secure a fruitful future. It is not an exaggeration to say that the success or failure of the United Nations depends on its ability to make a meaningful contribution to the solution of the contemporary problems of Africa.

Africa is a vast and varied continent, characterized by intense contradictions. On the positive side, African leaders are working hard to transcend their dependence on others for the maintenance of regional stability and economic prosperity. In the Central African Republic, for instance, African mediators and troops are helping resolve problems arising from a period of acute instability. In Sierra Leone, a subregional organization, the Economic Community of West African States, paved the way for the restoration of the democratically elected Government. This, hopefully, will signal the end of a protracted insurgency. An increasing number of African nations are abandoning inefficient State-dominated economic models in favour of outward-looking, market-based systems. In over two dozen countries, pro-democracy movements have brought about substantial reforms and the growth of democratic institutions, particularly a free press.

On the down side, African issues still dominate the agenda of the Security Council. There is, therefore, a widely shared perception that the progress attained so far has not been sufficient and that the recent achievements in Africa are still too fragile to serve as a bulwark against conflicts. This state of affairs is all the more disquieting in the light of some of the characteristics of these conflicts. They include indiscriminate attacks on

civilians, the use of child soldiers in warfare, creation of large refugee populations, the deliberate fomenting of ethnic hatred and transborder interventionism.

It is dangerous to generalize about the sources of conflicts in Africa as about most other things African. Yet there is, unfortunately, a *leitmotif* associated with most of the African crises. It is the recurrent bitter theme of economic disparity and social deprivation.

A large part of the solution to the current African problems therefore lies in the recognition of the intrinsic link between the promotion of economic growth and the construction of durable peace. In our opinion, this is also one of the most powerful messages of the Secretary-General's report on Africa of 13 April 1998.

The experience of many countries in transition, including my own, has shown that accelerated economic performance requires better use of existing resources, increase in investment and strengthening of the private sector. Macroeconomic reform is also essential, in particular efforts to restructure public finance and secure an independent monetary authority. Our experience also corroborates the view of the Secretary-General that the people themselves are the first and foremost resource for economic development. The general education and training of people, as well as the imparting of specialized knowledge and know-how, is thus of utmost importance.

This experience aside, it is important to recognize that the international community has an obligation to enhance the capacity of African Governments to manage their economies effectively. Many countries in Africa are still hobbled by a lack of adequate basic infrastructure and by severe fiscal problems. International involvement, especially that of financial institutions, is also required to address the pressing issue of unsustainable debt overhang. Action in this area would contribute greatly to the restoration of macroeconomic stability and investor confidence in Africa.

Many of the basic answers to the African problems are economic in nature. However, it is equally clear that the immediate challenges to peace and security in Africa fall within the competence of the Security Council. These challenges have to be given the highest priority, not the least because peace is an essential prerequisite for growth and development.

At present, the Security Council is seized with a number of specific African situations. Additionally, the Council has embarked upon an important endeavour to formulate guidelines concerning several key issues of conflict prevention and management in Africa in general.

Slovenia supports important new ideas that are being advanced to strengthen the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council and to stem illicit arms flows to and within Africa. We are also pleased by the adoption of specific proposals for the strengthening of African peacekeeping potential. We believe it is important to establish a credible and effective rapid-response capability, backed by sufficient political will and practical assistance from the international community.

Furthermore, Slovenia supports the efforts to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, as well as with other regional and subregional arrangements. The focus here should be on conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this context, we would like to reiterate our belief that such cooperation should be based on the framework established by Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

This ministerial meeting demonstrates the universal support for Africa and bears witness to the search for new approaches to solving African problems. The resolutions and presidential statements which have been adopted so far address some of the basic issues and will prove especially useful in the work of the Security Council in the future.

In closing, let me emphasize that despite the emergence of new conflicts in Africa during the past year, the potential for positive change may also be greater today than it has been for decades. Africa is not an arena for proxy wars any more. The end of the cold war has also reanimated the Security Council, thus allowing it to play a greater role in the resolution of African problems. Led by its second African Secretary-General in a row, the United Nations is well poised to promote effectively peace and security in Africa. Slovenia therefore reaffirms its full support for the continuous efforts to attain these noble objectives.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Our image of Africa today is a multifaceted one. In this forum, we deal with crises and threats to peace and

security. Sadly, a heavy agenda has been offered by events unfolding on the African continent.

But this is not the whole picture. We should not forget the positive development in Africa during the last decades: health and education have greatly improved, a majority of States have had democratic elections and in many countries the downward economic trend has been broken and real growth is taking place.

Africa is opening up to the challenges of globalization, to free political debate and to the search for new models grown from within rather than imported from abroad. There is great vitality, but also turmoil.

The point of departure of today's meeting is our common responsibility for international peace and security as it applies to Africa. We need to consider openly and self-critically how the Council has met this responsibility. We need to look ahead at what the Security Council and we as Member States can do differently and better.

First and foremost, the Security Council must summon the necessary political will. It must be ready to take action, in Africa as elsewhere, from early warning, prevention and political persuasion to peacekeeping and, if need be, Chapter VII action, as well as post-conflict peace-building.

The Council should continue to develop a new generation of peacekeeping operations, with better balance and coordination between military, political, civilian-police and other civilian components. When new or expanded peacekeeping operations are needed, all Council members must be ready to reach decisions without undue delay and to take financial responsibility for them.

Secondly, the Council must support African action for regional security, not as a way of minimizing its own involvement, but in order to ensure sustainable regional support for peaceful solutions. There is also a need for an active Council role in following up operations which it has mandated.

Thirdly, the Security Council and the United Nations system as a whole must close the gap between political and humanitarian action. The African continent bears a heavy burden of refugees and internally displaced people. Landmines and the proliferation of small arms cripple people and nations. Child soldiers are permanently brutalized. These are serious threats to human security.

Every State must exercise its responsibility for the well-being of its people. The Security Council also has an important role to provide support through humanitarian action. It should do its utmost to ensure that the measures it takes in doing so can also serve as stepping stones to longer-term political solutions.

Fourthly, we should see to it that the United Nations system as a whole, together with African organizations, gives full priority to conflict prevention. This is a moral imperative and, in fact, a political, humanitarian and economic necessity.

In the end, conflict prevention is a question of political will. Solidarity and sovereignty can never mean that potentially disastrous domestic behaviour should be immune to international attention until the disaster occurs. The international community must be ready to respond quickly and generously to requests for assistance.

The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa is an impressive document. It is candid in its analysis and clear in its message. Africa and Africans should rise to the challenge, but they must not be left standing alone.

The Security Council is engaged in a wide-ranging process to consider recommendations from the Secretary-General and from Member States. It is an opportunity for the Security Council to move beyond its everyday agenda of crisis management and apply a broader and longer-term perspective. This work has already produced a number of concrete results in key areas such as the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa, peacekeeping and sanctions. The work will continue on important questions such as refugee security, reducing arms flows and post-conflict peace-building. It will gradually involve all parts of the United Nations system.

Peace and security in Africa can only be attained through common action by Africa and by the international community, by civic organizations and by ordinary men and women committed to a better future for themselves and for their children.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council met on 24 September 1998, at the level of Foreign Ministers, in accordance with its resolution 1170 (1998) of 28 May 1998, to assess progress in achieving peace and security in Africa since the last Ministerial Meeting on 25 September 1997. It recalls the statement of its President (S/PRST/1997/46) of 25 September 1997 and reiterates its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report of 13 April 1998 (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to Africa in the areas of conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations. It also reaffirms the principles of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

"The Security Council underlines that peaceful societies rest upon respect for fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person. It recognizes the close linkage between the promotion of economic and social development and the prevention of conflict. It stresses that the quest for peace in Africa requires a comprehensive, concerted and determined approach, encompassing the eradication of poverty, the promotion of democracy, sustainable development and respect for human rights, as well as conflict prevention and resolution, including peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. It underlines that genuine political will is necessary, in Africa and beyond, to achieve durable results towards these ends, and stresses the urgent need for Member States, the United Nations system, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the international financial institutions and other relevant organizations to continue to consider appropriate action in response to the comprehensive recommendations set out by the Secretary-General in his report.

"The Security Council recognizes the positive developments in Africa in the past year and welcomes progress achieved by African States in promoting democratization, economic reform, the protection of human rights and sustainable development. It commends efforts by African States and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. It welcomes progress made in Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic, and in the peace process in Burundi. It urges all States and relevant bodies to provide financial and technical support to strengthen African regional and subregional arrangements for conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and security and dispute settlement. It calls for an enhanced partnership between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations in support of these efforts.

"The Security Council expresses its continuing concern over the number and intensity of, and the interrelationship among, conflicts in Africa, and especially at the emergence of new conflicts during the past year. The border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the resurgence of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the impasse in the peace process in Angola, the continued violence in Sierra Leone, and the complex emergencies in Somalia and Sudan, among others, cause grave concern. These situations, which in some cases threaten the stability of large parts of the continent, call for concerted action by African States, the international community and the United Nations system to prevent further tragedy.

"The Security Council urgently calls on African States and all parties concerned to demonstrate the political will to settle their disputes by peaceful rather than military means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and to respect international humanitarian law and the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of States in the region. It also encourages States in the region to continue to improve the implementation of good governance and undertake the various reforms needed to promote economic growth. It calls upon the international community to assist those efforts initiated by African States and regional and subregional organizations aimed at such goals.

"For its part, the Security Council expresses its renewed commitment to contributing to conflict resolution in Africa. In this context, it recalls its decisions during the past year to authorize two new United Nations peacekeeping operations, in the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone, to assist

efforts towards peace and national reconciliation. It also expresses its determination to improve further its ability to prevent conflicts, and to make its responses to conflicts more efficient and effective, and underlines its support for measures taken within the United Nations system to strengthen post-conflict peace-building efforts.

"The Security Council, based on the recommendations of its ad hoc Working Group established pursuant to its resolution 1170 (1998), has already begun to take concrete steps as part of a wider, comprehensive response to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General. It has taken action to help strengthen support for regional and subregional initiatives as well as to enhance coordination between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. It has also taken action in order to strengthen the effectiveness of arms embargoes imposed by the Council and addressed the need to support the strengthening of African peacekeeping capacity.

"The Security Council encourages the ad hoc Working Group to continue its work, in accordance with its mandate, and to elaborate further concrete recommendations to the Council, in particular on the need to stem illicit arms flows to and in Africa and with regard to measures to assist host Governments in Africa in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps and to enhance the ability of the Council to monitor activities authorized by it but carried out by Member States or coalitions of Member States.

"The Security Council, recognizing that the challenge of achieving peace and security in Africa is a continuous process, will continue to assess progress in promoting peace and security in Africa at the level of Foreign Ministers, on a biennial basis, in accordance with its resolution 1170 (1998)."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1998/29.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.